

Today's News - Tuesday, September 8, 2015

- ArcSpace brings us eyefuls of (very cool) CEBRA Toons that "communicate the insistence on a room for optimism, playfulness, and vigor in contemporary architecture."
- Lange is a bit fed up with architects claiming their grass-topped "wedge" buildings are landscapes, not architecture: "Pulling up the earth (and filling the hole in with glass) is as willful and timely a gesture as slotting people into boxes in the sky. It's not magic, it's architecture, circa 2015."
- Sudjic and Jones debate whether the Walkie Talkie should be knocked down: "demolish this deranged building to create a firebreak that ends the inferno of towers" + "What we need now is less dynamite, less sound and fury, and a hard look at how we can do things better" (perhaps "turn it into a refugee hostel").
- Beauman calls the Walkie Talkie "a sty in London's eye - and proves we can't say no to money" - the Carbuncle Cup "is a perverse celebration of this. It's a sarcastic toast by a maudlin drunk."
- Gehl et al. respond to NYC's "kneejerk reaction" to "a couple of street performers' shaking down tourists" in Times Square: "Civic culture needs cultivating and curating. Unless we do so, public space can become a public nuisance."
- Hume cheers Cormier's small, new plaza coming to Toronto, though the idea of public space being part of daily life "remains difficult for some, especially in a city historically suspicious of any occasion or space that encourages people to sit and enjoy themselves."
- Cramer sees the World War I Memorial design competition as a chance for traditionalists and modernists "to set aside their differences" (fat chance).
- Baillieu parses the RIBA for Clients report: the "well-meaning but ultimately fruitless client research...has merely dodged the big question: who is responsible for the mind-numbing mediocrity of so much new building and for demanding of these same clients that they stand up for quality? The answer I suspect is no one."
- McGuigan returns from the Aalto Symposium in Finland, where the appreciation of design "provides an impressive lesson in the power of good architecture brought to a wide public realm."
- Wainwright finds a few "design niggles" with RSH+P's colorful prefab Y:Cube homes for the homeless, but thinks it's a "a laudable initiative" - as long as it's not taken as a "silver bullet" for the U.K.'s housing crisis: "there's a very real risk it could sow the seeds for a future of cheaply built, meanly scaled, less stable housing that can be conveniently swept away at a moment's notice."
- Ayers finds much to like in OMA's Fondazione Prada: it's "no temple of ostentatious wealth": "the conversion constitutes a 'catalogue' (how very OMA) of preservation strategies, from minimal intervention to total facsimile."
- As Gallaudet University launches its \$60 million design competition, campus architect Bauman "shares insights from a decade of research into DeafSpace design" and designing "for people who hear with their eyes."
- Julia Morgan's beautiful Herald-Examiner building in L.A., which "has been ripe for revitalization" for a long, long time, is being brought back to life.
- McGregor Coxall is tapped to design the landscapes for SANAA's Sydney Modern.
- A good reason to be in Detroit later this week: Culture Lab Detroit 2015 puts the focus on green space - "a topic already high on the list of urban planners, politicians, business leaders, foundations and artists in a city with so much abandoned property."
- Eyefuls of USGBC 2015 LEED for Homes Award winners + Eyefuls of the 88 projects shortlisted for Australia's Sustainability Awards (both great presentations).
- One we couldn't resist: the four designs (out of 10,292) vying to be New Zealand's new flag (three ferns and a koru).

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Colorful Condensations: Mikkel Frost's CEBRA Toons: Can a single drawing sum up the complexity of a sizable built project? ...hand-drawn Toons...amalgamates various drawing techniques into playful architectural sonnets...communicate the insistence on a room for optimism, playfulness, and vigor in contemporary architecture. [images]

Let's stop acting like the wedge is not architecture: ...has become an increasingly popular device for disguising architecture as landscape...architecture that is trying to avoid identification as architecture. "Who me?" it says, "I'm just a lawn."...Let's also stop treating the wedge as style-free. Pulling up the earth (and filling the hole in with glass) is as willful and timely a gesture as slotting people into boxes in the sky. It's not magic, it's architecture, circa 2015. By Alexandra Lange -- BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Ayers Saint Gross/Mahan Rykiel/Ziger/Snead; OMA/OLIN; SHoP; Mecanoo; Sven-Ingvar Andersson; Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd [images] - Dezeen

Should Britain's 'worst building' be demolished? The Walkie Talkie...awarded Building Design magazine's Carbuncle Cup. Should we just knock it down? ...demolish this deranged building to create a firebreak that ends the inferno of towers...much as I would wish this unappetising lump gone, dynamiting it...is not a great idea...creates the idea that there are quick fix answers to tough problems...What we need now is less dynamite, less sound and fury, and a hard look at how we can do things better...let's turn it into a refugee hostel. By Jonathan Jones and Deyan Sudjic -- Rafael Viñoly - Guardian (UK)

The Walkie Talkie is a sty in London's eye - and proves we can't say no to money: ...the Carbuncle Cup is a perverse celebration of this. It's a sarcastic toast by a maudlin drunk. It's an acknowledgment that opinion, taste, criticism and debate are really no more than epiphenomenal spume. By Ned Beauman -- Rafael Viñoly - Guardian (UK)

Times Square: The Naked Truth: ...an extreme reaction to a couple of street performers' shaking down tourists for cash...a sense that somehow the plaza has made Times Square only more sleazy and vulgar than ever. The kneejerk reaction of some city officials...is unsurprising...Civic culture needs cultivating and curating. Unless we do so, public space can become a public nuisance...The city should view the challenge...as a call to create a diverse, dense, intense experience of public life that we can all enjoy. By Jan Gehl, Jeff Risom, and Julia Day; Gehl Architects - New York Times

Plaza at Yonge and Front will offer new way: New hunger for city life marks return to urbanity...The spot in question isn't large, but until recently, it didn't exist..."Public space must be a part of daily life." This idea remains difficult for some, especially in a city historically suspicious of any occasion or space that encourages people to sit and enjoy themselves. By Christopher Hume -- Claude Cormier + Associés [image] - Toronto Star

A Time for Peace: The design competition for the World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., presents traditionalists and modernists with an opportunity to set aside their differences: Of the five finalist designs...one is classical. This is a remarkable achievement...The fact that it's noteworthy at all - that it's unusual - is just sad...(it doesn't help the classical cause when one of its outspoken champions employs scorched-earth P.R. tactics)... By Ned Cramer -- Kimmel Studio; M. Paul Friedberg + Partners; Oehme, van Sweden & Associates; Duncan G. Stroik; Hammond Beeby Rupert Ange; Robert A.M. Stern Architects - Architect Magazine

Most clients would dispense with architects if they could: Architects have become the whipping boy for clients' failure to produce great buildings:...while architecture looks to be in a relatively healthy state in the UK, its professional status is not...Stephen Hodder's well-meaning but ultimately fruitless client research [RIBA for Clients] has merely dodged the big

question: who is responsible for the mind-numbing mediocrity of so much new building and for demanding of these same clients that they stand up for quality? The answer I suspect is no one. By Amanda Baillieu- [BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

An Object Lesson in Design for Everyone: In Finland, good architecture extends from a glass you hold to the city you live in: The appreciation of design seems embedded in the country's DNA...provides an impressive lesson...in the power of good architecture brought to a wide public realm. By Cathleen McGuigan -- Alvar Aalto Symposium; Versta Architects; Lahdelma & Mahlamäki Architects; JKMM; OOEPA; Rahul Mehrotra; Raul Pantaleo/TAMassociati; Carin Smuts; Liu Xiaodu/URBANUS-Architectural Record

Return of the prefabs: inside Richard Rogers' Y:Cube homes for homeless people: With riotously bright colours, his 'move-on' housing scheme is dressed in the child-like garb of a My First House. But design niggles mean nothing to the tenants getting their own homes for the first time...a laudable initiative...but it must guard against being rolled out as an alternative to...long-term affordable homes. If taken up as the silver bullet...there's a very real risk it could sow the seeds for a future of cheaply built, meanly scaled, less stable housing that can be conveniently swept away at a moment's notice. By Oliver Wainwright -- Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners - [Guardian \(UK\)](#)

Fondazione Prada: Despite its gold cladding, Rem Koolhaas's latest building in Milan is no temple of ostentatious wealth: ...marks a deliberate shift for OMA away from huge statement buildings towards the preservation of existing spaces and "collisions" between old and new...For the architects, the conversion thus constitutes a "catalogue" (how very OMA) of preservation strategies, from minimal intervention to total facsimile. By Andrew Ayers -- Wes Anderson [\[images\]](#)- [Icon \(UK\)](#)

How to design for people who hear with their eyes: As a \$60m international design competition is launched by Gallaudet University, Washington, DC's specialist university for the deaf, its campus architect Hansel Bauman shares insights from a decade of research into DeafSpace design. - [BD/Building Design \(UK\)](#)

Downtown LA's Beautiful Herald-Examiner Building Will Finally Be Brought Back to Life: ...designed by Hearst Castle architect Julia Morgan, has been ripe for revitalization for so long...But now that DTLA's rising hotness is national news, it's finally time for this massive former newspaper headquarters to go mixed-use. -- Gensler; Togawa Smith Martin- [Curbed Los Angeles](#)

Landscapes by McGregor Coxall complement SANAA's stacked pavilions for Art Gallery of NSW project: Sydney Modern Project will transform the site to the north of the existing Gallery...will preserve the two 19th-century facades of the existing Gallery, protect heritage trees and retain The Domain's much-used playing fields. - [Architecture & Design \(Australia\)](#)

Culture Lab Detroit turning 'green' for 2015: ...growing on the wings of a recent two-year \$100,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation...focus on green space grew out of...the relevancy of a topic already high on the list of urban planners, politicians, business leaders, foundations and artists in a city with so much abandoned property. September 10-11- [Detroit Free Press](#)

USGBC Announces 2015 LEED for Homes Award Winners: ...honor multi-and single-family residential and affordable housing projects, as well as builders and developers, that represent high-performance homes and technology. -- Wallace Roberts Todd/WRT; Archipelago Hawaii; TCA Architects; Michael Maltzan Architecture; Gerding Edlen; etc. [\[images\]](#)- [Architect Magazine](#)

Finalists unveiled in Australia's most competitive Sustainability Awards yet: Judges have shortlisted 68 finalists across 10 categories. [\[images\]](#)- [Architecture & Design \(Australia\)](#)

The four flag contenders: The government's Flag Consideration Panel have chosen four from the 10,292 alternative designs. Three ferns and a koru are the options for a change of flag in New Zealand. [\[images\]](#)- [Stuff \(New Zealand\)](#)

ANN Feature: New Name and New Directions: Boddewyn Gaynor Architects, DPC: Q&A with the firm's principals about the changes they've made, and how they affect the firm's operations and future plans. [\[images\]](#)- [ArchNewsNow.com](#)

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